



Livable & Sustainable Neighborhoods Initiative

1st Year Anniversary

Annual Report
2012-2013

CITY OF HARTFORD
Pedro E. Segarra, Mayor

Table of Contents

Introduction	Page 3
History of Livable & Sustainable Neighborhoods Initiative (LSNI)	Page 4
Legislative Activity	Page 7
I. City's Anti-Blight Fund	
II. Addition to the Anti-Blight Ordinance Violation Conditions	
Anti-Blight Ordinance (ABO) Activity	Page 9
I. Definitions and Overview of the ABO Process	
II. End of the Year Statistics from January 13, 2012 - January 13, 2013	
Overview of all Abated Properties	Page 13
Renovated Properties	Page 15
LSNI Crew Activity	Page 19
Internal Assignments Activity	Page 20
Infrastructure and Community Development Projects	Page 22
LSNI Moving Forward	Page 24

Introduction

The City of Hartford has a clear vision to promote livable and sustainable neighborhoods. In response, Mayor Pedro E. Segarra established the *Livable & Sustainable Neighborhoods Initiative* (LSNI) program to improve the City's quality of life by "ensuring resources are used efficiently, the carrying capacity of infrastructure is not exceeded, diversity is treasured, citizens are engaged and involved and the local economy is vibrant." On January 13, 2012, the program staffed with four Assistants to the Chief Operating Officer (one position for each district) re-launched the implementation of the updated City Anti-Blight Ordinance. The first round of preliminary notice letters were sent to properties with the highest number of violations in the Central, North, South and West districts. Respectfully, a new round of properties has been added each month, totaling 226 properties to enter the ABO process since the inception of LSNI. In March of 2012, LSNI continued their efforts against the City's blight by introducing the creation of the Neighborhoods Initiative Crew (also known as the LSNI Crew), a team from the City's Department of Public Works dedicated to the remediation of health nuisances on private property. In addition to the LSNI Crew, LSNI began managing some community development projects and developing policies focused on sustaining the City's local neighborhoods. Although a year has passed, LSNI is still evolving into an efficient and productive program in the midst of continual changes and challenges. Our hope is for the Livable & Sustainable Neighborhoods Initiative program to be used as a model to encourage and support the advancement of the City of Hartford.

History of LSNI

The Livable & Sustainable Neighborhoods Initiative (LSNI) is based on Mayor Segarra's vision of improving Hartford's neighborhoods by "ensuring resources are used efficiently, the carrying capacity of infrastructure is not exceeded, diversity is treasured, citizens are engaged and involved and the local economy is vibrant". As a comprehensive initiative LSNI was rolled out to the public in June 2011.

Highlights from those presentations are as follows:

- The City was divided into four districts (North, West, Central, and South) with four components (Blight Strike Force, Infrastructure Improvements & Community Development Projects, Programmatic Alignment, and Performance Measurement).
- An all-inclusive property survey to be completed by Licenses & Inspections during the summer of 2011 evaluating every parcel in the four districts.
- Eight LSNI demonstration areas were chosen based on the City's greatest needs shown from HartStat data, 311, 911, and police calls for service. These areas were presented to the public laying out in each area targeted blighted properties, infrastructure/community development projects, and complimentary capital improvement projects.

Next steps taken were the assignment of responsibilities and the hiring of staff:

- Licenses & Inspections (L&I) conducted the city-wide property survey with their existing staff from July 2011 with a completion in the spring of 2012 – "blighted properties" in the City totaled 771 properties with two or more potential violations. (This survey was used to select the initial rounds of blighted properties for each district's "Blight Strike Force" concentrated on first).
- August 2011 - An additional attorney for the Corporation Counsel's office was hired to assist with the program (bringing the total to two assigned to LSNI).
- December 2011 - The "Anti-Blight Special Fund" was created - Ordinance Section 9-94(e).
- September thru December 2011 - Corporation Counsel's office worked closely in conjunction with the COO's office, stakeholders, and other City departments in developing changes to the existing Anti-Blight Ordinance and developing a standardized procedure for the enforcement of that ordinance, as well as, a training manual for the Hearing Officer's appeal process.
- December 12, 2011 – An Assistant to the Chief Operating Officer (ACOO) was hired for each of the four districts to manage the separate district teams. The first weekly district meetings were formed and implemented.

History of LSNI

- January 2012 - The Corporation Counsel's office in conjunction with the COO's office, L&I, and MHIS drafted and implemented the "Preliminary Anti-Blight Ordinance Letter" (PABOL), Notice of Violation Letters, and Citation Letters for use in enforcing the Anti-Blight Program.
- January 13, 2012 – Round One of PABOL's were mailed out to property owners.
- January 23, 2012 - An Inspector II was hired for each district to inspect and enforce the Anti-Blight Ordinance.
- February 2012 – Three (3) independent Hearing Officers were hired and trained to hear appeals requested by property owners.
- During the first six months the program developed at a extremely fast pace. LSNI sent out eight (8) rounds of PABOLs bringing the number of properties in the process to 160 by June 1st (LSNI was now relying on community and team member's input for developing the "Rounds"). LSNI met with community groups, made improvements in neighborhoods, hosted interdepartmental meetings, trained internal staff, responded immediately to internal and external concerns, and uncovered an abundance of deficiencies requiring both evaluation and correction.

A six month Internal Assessment and Progress Report on LSNI was completed on September 10, 2012 and made available to the public.

Highlights from this Report:

- In its "infancy" LSNI was a success in many respects, bringing change to Hartford, and delivering Mayor Segarra's message loud and clear that the City is serious in moving forward to improve its neighborhoods. The acceptance and welcoming response from community stakeholders and NRZ members demonstrated the necessity of the LSNI program.
- LSNI being the innovative forward thinking Initiative it was designed to be uncovered many deficiencies existing in the City of Hartford's infrastructure. LSNI suffered many disappointments and challenges immediately, as with any new program, change to existing systems is an integral part of success and this change was met with varying degrees of resistance. Some forms of that resistance were managerial, outdated procedures and policies, software limitations, and interdepartmental communication skills.
- Recommendations were made to develop more updated procedures for City departments (including internal audit in those developments), to develop a plan and implement a way to maintain and exchange up to date reliable information and data, and to utilize the City's MUNIS software system more consistently across departments.
- LSNI adapted well through some staffing changes, reassignments, and resignations while still maintaining the momentum of the program, moving forward and changing to keep up and in line with Mayor Segarra's vision.

History of LSNI

LSNI “Post Report” September 2012 thru Present:

- LSNI, under the direct guidance of the Interim Chief Operating Officer Saundra Kee Borges, has focused on implementing the recommendations made in the six month assessment, developing procedures to increase interdepartmental cohesion and accountability, developing programs to help property owners without the financial stability to abate their own blighted conditions, and increasing the City’s focus on developing a stronger partnership with community groups and developers.
- LSNI is taking the lead working closely with Corporation Counsel’s office, the Finance Department, and the Tax Department in developing a procedure for the tracking, enforcement, and collection of the newly adopted ordinance pertaining to a Special Assessment on blighted housing.
- The recently implemented LSNI’s Neighborhoods Initiative Crew (the LSNI Crew) made up of sixteen (16) employees housed in the Department of Public Works has taken control of maintaining all City properties (not for public use). LSNI has reinvented an existing outdated procedure for abating private property nuisance violations to a fast moving, more efficient and productive process of cleaning properties and recouping City expenses. This new process will utilize the LSNI Crew to its maximum potential and immediately impact the cleanliness of all neighborhoods in the City.
- Strategizing on how to address problems brought to light during the rollout of the program dealing with community needs and concerns.
- Corporation Counsel’s office has been concentrating on the enforcement of the Anti-Blight Citations and maximizing the City’s interest by moving for default judgments, recording liens, and foreclosing, if necessary, in order to improve a property.
- The sheer volume of properties in the ABO process and LSNI’s commitment to holding non-responsive property owners accountable has led to the development of many different internal procedures for tracking and documenting information, as well as, the creation of committees to keep up with the legalities of the process to protect the City’s interest and maximize the value of LSNI employees time working toward eradicating blight and advancing the Mayor’s vision of a “Livable and Sustainable” Hartford.

Legislative Activity

City of Hartford's Anti-Blight Fund

Since the inception of LSNI, three Ordinance changes have directly affected the program:

- The first to be passed in December of 2011 was the addition to Section 9-94(e) – “Anti-Blight Special Fund”. This non-transferable and revolving fund was set up to capture any and all fees, fines, liens, foreclosure payments and assessments collected pursuant to the Anti-Blight Program and reuse the money for enforcement of the program.
- The original Anti-Blight Programs definition of “blighted premises” contained eleven (11) violations. In October of 2012, a twelfth violation was added to the list addressing vacancy.
- The final additions and deletions to the Anti-Blight Program Ordinance all addressed the “Special Assessment”: Section 9-91 definition of “blighted housing”, Section 9-99 blighted housing special assessment, Section 9-100 Blighted Housing Review Committee, Section 9-101 Special Assessment, and the deletion of Section 9-98(c) Special Assessment on blighted properties.

Legislative Activity

Anti-Blight Ordinance Violation Conditions Chapter 9, Article V of the City of Hartford's Municipal Code

***Blighted premises* means any building, structure, vacant lot or grounds, whether vacant or occupied, in which the Director of Licenses and Inspections, or the Fire Marshal, or the Director of Health and Human Services, or the Chief of Police have verified that at least two (2) of the following conditions exist:**

- (1)** Exterior windows or doors are broken or missing or are not secured and painted in accordance with subsection 9-98(a) of this article;
- (2)** Exterior walls, roofs, stairs, porches, floors or chimneys are damaged, collapsing or deteriorating or permit the interior of the building to be open to the weather;
- (3)** Foundation walls are damaged, collapsing, crumbling or contain open cracks or breaks;
- (4)** Interior walls, stairs, porches, floors, ceilings, support pillars or beams are damaged, collapsing or deteriorating;
- (5)** Exterior additions, including, but not limited to, canopies, marquees, signs, awnings, fire escapes, standpipes and exhaust ducts, are damaged, collapsing or deteriorating;
- (6)** Fences are broken, deteriorating to the point of decay, are in otherwise dilapidated condition, or are damaged to the extent that they allow access to the property;
- (7)** Other conditions exist that reflect a level of maintenance which is not in keeping with community standards, including, but not limited to, graffiti that is clearly visible from the street;
- (8)** The premises are attracting illegal activity as evidenced by multiple felony or misdemeanor arrests on the premises; multiple felony or misdemeanor warrants issued or served to a person residing in the premises;
- (9)** The property is a fire hazard;
- (10)** The property is a factor creating a substantial and unreasonable interference with the reasonable and lawful use and enjoyment of other space within the building or premises or within the neighborhood as documented and reported to the Director of Licenses and Inspections by neighborhood complaints;
- (11)** The property is a menace to the public health, safety, or welfare in its present condition because of rat infestation, overgrown vegetation, trash and garbage, abandoned cars, improper grading, or other factors;
- (12)** Extended vacancy of a dwelling, multiple dwelling or mixed commercial use property.

Anti-Blight Ordinance (ABO) Activity

Definitions

Summary of Properties – all properties being addressed by LSNi are outlined in the following sections:

- **Properties Receiving Preliminary Notice Letters** – properties for which a letter was sent to property owners when at least two potential violations of the City's Anti-Blight Ordinance (ABO) are believed to exist. Property owners receiving a Preliminary Anti-Blight Ordinance Letter (PABOL) have 30 days to contact City staff and schedule a meeting to discuss the condition of the property, and demonstrate the intent of improvement.
- **Properties Receiving Notice of Violations** – properties for which the property had at least two potential violations, received the PABOL, and have demonstrated insufficient effort or progress to remediate, confirmed by a City Inspector. The Notice of Violation (NOV) requires compliance within 30 days of receipt of notice, failure by the property owner to remediate violations result in issuance of a citation. The citation includes a description of the specific violation, an explanation of how to remediate the violation, instructions on the right to appeal, and dollar amount of fine(s) which will accrue on a per day per violation basis, \$100 per day per violation.
- **Properties Receiving Citations** – properties for which any violation that a property owner has not remediated within 30 days of the Notice of Violation (NOV). To reiterate, the citation includes a description of the specific violation, an explanation of how to remediate the violation, instructions on the right to appeal, and dollar amount of fine(s) which will accrue on a per day per violation basis, \$100 per day per violation.
- **Properties Being Monitored** – properties that have not entered the ABO process, and/or received a Notice of Violation, but have contacted City staff, and/or received a Notice of Violation but was found not liable to pay citations by an appeal hearing officer, and/or are being monitored by requisite City staff.
- **Abated Properties** – All blight violations have been remediated. The property is currently in compliance with, and is no longer subject of any enforcement actions through the Anti-Blight Ordinance.

Anti-Blight Ordinance (ABO) Activity

Overview of the Anti-Blight Ordinance Process

For purposes of summation only, the general procedures follow these steps:

Process Begins- Referral of potential blight violation(s) received by the City. The district's ABO Inspector surveys the property to determine the number of potential violations. Based on the number of potential violations and its current condition, the property is then selected by the LSNi district team to be presented for approval. All properties must be approved by the City's Chief Operating Officer before entering the ABO process.

Preliminary Anti-Blight Ordinance Letter- All approved properties receive a Preliminary Anti-Blight Ordinance Letter which states LSNi's mission of improving the City's neighborhoods, how the property has been identified for potential blight violations and that a full inspection of the property will be conducted in 30 days. Additionally the letter expresses the City's interest in working with motivated owners to improve their properties by presenting several funding opportunities available through the City of Hartford (i.e. tax-deferral program, housing loan funds, informational sessions etc.).

Initial Inspection- Inspection is ordered and carried out to verify all violation conditions.

Notice of Violation Letter- If the initial inspection verifies the existence of a violation, a Notice of Violation Letter is issued and the property owner is given 30 days to rectify the violation before actual citations are issued and fines begin to accrue.

Re-Inspection- The property is re-inspected after the expiration of the 30 day abatement period to confirm that violations have either been abated, continue to be in existence with little or no action taken to correct by the owner or continue to be in existence with sufficient progress (in the appropriate Inspector's judgment).

Notice of Citation Letter or Completion Letter- If the re-inspection verifies that the violation(s) persist, a Citation Letter is issued for each violation and fined the property owner is \$100 per day per violation accruing as of the date of the citation. If the re-inspection verifies that the violation has been abated a Completion Letter will be mailed to the property owner(s) and all enforcement action ceases.

Citation Appeal Hearings- Property owner(s) has the right to appeal citations within ten days following receipt of citation. Upon appeal, a file is submitted to the Office of Corporation Counsel for administrative review. The day the property owner(s) appeal, all accruing fines are tolled until a Citation Hearing Officer renders a decision. The Hearing Administrator determines the hearing date. If no appeal is made, the citation is referred to the Office of Corporation Counsel for administrative review prior to referral to Citation Action Committee and default shall be entered by the Hearing Officer against property owner(s).

Anti-Blight Ordinance (ABO) Activity

Overview of the Anti-Blight Ordinance Process

Citation Action Committee- The Committee (which includes the COO, Director of Development Services, Director of Public Works, Tax Collector, Housing Division representative, LSNI representatives and Corporation Counsel representative) determines the next steps to resolve the properties in which the anti-blight enforcement action has not resolved the blight issue up at this point. Citations may be recorded as blight liens, collected by the City or referred for collection at this point. If violations continue to exist at this point, the City may abate conditions and lien the property to secure the expenses of such abatement or seek court permission to enforce orders. Violations may also be referred to Housing Court for criminal prosecution, if appropriate.

Lien Inspection & Enforcement Action- The district's ABO Inspector conducts a lien inspection to prepare for a default judgment of the outstanding citations through Corporation Counsel's Office.

Other Related Anti-Blight Ordinance (ABO) Activity

Blight Prevention Consultation Inspection- The district's ABO Inspectors offer courtesy blight prevention consultations to City of Hartford residents. Residents do not have to be in the ABO process or have received a Preliminary Anti-Blight Ordinance Letter to request a consultation.

Forbearance Agreements- For potential buyers of properties that have received a Notice of Violation and/or Notice of Citation before the property closing, the City may enter into a forbearance agreement with the potential buyer and their legal representative. The agreement includes the buyers and sellers of the property. Upon transfer of title to the new owner the City agrees to forbear taking further action until the expiration of a set date. In the agreement the new owner must abate all outstanding blight conditions by that date.

Tax Deferral Inspection- In collaboration with the City's Tax Collector's office, the district's ABO Inspectors conduct an inspection to verify the abatement improvement work completed in order to qualify for the Tax Deferral Program.

Summary of LSNI Anti-Blight Activity by District

For the Period of January 13, 2012 – January 13, 2013
End of the Year Statistics

	Central	North	South	West	City-Wide
Total Properties that are and were in the ABO Process	53	74	48	51	226
Properties Receiving Notice of Violations	39	67	39	35	180
Properties Cited For Violations	28	40	30	26	121
Abated Properties (46 voluntary & 22 involuntary)	17	16	12	23	68

Overview of Abated Properties

For the Period of January 13, 2012 - January 13, 2013

Abated- All blight violations have been remediated. The property is currently in compliance with, and is no longer subject to any enforcement actions through the Anti-Blight Ordinance.

Property Address		District	Neighborhood	# of Violations	Date Abated	Permits or COC*
529	Ann Uccello St	Central	Downtown	(2)	6/6/12	-
832	Broad St	Central	Frog Hollow	(3)	7/9/12	-
103	Babcock St	Central	Frog Hollow	(5)	9/7/12	-
177	Lawrence St	Central	Frog Hollow	(1)	11/23/12	-
34-36	Lisbon Ave	Central	Sheldon-Charter Oak	n/a	11/26/12	Permits
174	Park Terrace	Central	Frog Hollow	(5)	11/21/12	-
3-5	Putnam St	Central	Frog Hollow	(1)	7/12/12	Permits
103	Putnam St	Central	Frog Hollow	(7)	7/9/12	-
45	Squire St	Central	Frog Hollow	(7)	3/30/12	-
433	Summit St	Central	Frog Hollow	(6)	7/25/12	Demo.
439	Summit St	Central	Frog Hollow	(5)	4/20/12	-
445	Summit St	Central	Frog Hollow	(5)	4/20/12	-
49	Ward St	Central	Frog Hollow	(5)	6/14/12	-
75	Ward St	Central	Frog Hollow	(6)	9/24/12	-
126	Ward St	Central	Frog Hollow	(2)	6/14/12	-
175	Washington St	Central	Frog Hollow	(6)	4/9/12	-
487	Zion St	Central	Frog Hollow	(3)	4/3/12	-
49-51	Acton St	North	Northeast	(8)	9/11/12	Demo.
32	Bedford St	North	Clay Arsenal	(6)	5/11/12	-
41	Bedford St	North	Clay Arsenal	(4)	5/11/12	-
45	Bedford St	North	Clay Arsenal	(6)	5/11/12	Permit
51	Bedford St	North	Clay Arsenal	(4)	5/11/12	Permits
61	Bedford St	North	Clay Arsenal	(3)	5/11/12	-
188	Capen St	North	Northeast	n/a	4/10/12	-
208	Capen St	North	Northeast	(7)	8/6/12	Permit
84	Chestnut St	North	Clay Arsenal	(6)	7/24/12	-
119	Edgewood St	North	Upper Albany	(6)	6/20/12	Permits
270	Edgewood St	North	Northeast	n/a	2/29/12	-
479	Garden St	North	Clay Arsenal	n/a	9/11/12	Permits
83	Love Ln	North	Northeast	(2)	7/18/12	-
4	Martin St	North	Northeast	n/a	9/11/12	Both
78	Martin St	North	Northeast	(2)	6/26/12	Permit
15	Pliny St	North	Upper Albany	n/a	5/4/12	Permit

Overview of Abated Properties

For the Period of January 13, 2012 - January 13, 2013

Property Address		District	Neighborhood	# of Violations	Date Abated	Permits or COC*
28	Bond St	South	Barry Square	(1)	2/1/12	-
591	Hillside Av	South	South End	(1)	8/20/12	-
57	Lincoln St	South	Barry Square	(4)	8/3/12	-
173	Linnmore St	South	Southwest	n/a	5/9/12	-
541	Maple Ave	South	Barry Square	(2)	12/6/12	-
46	Montowese St	South	South End	(5)	11/14/12	Permits
14/16	Shultas Pl	South	Barry Square	(3)	9/7/12	Permit
105	Shultas Pl	South	Barry Square	(4)	5/23/12	-
353	Wethersfield Av	South	South End	(5)	3/25/12	-
641	Wethersfield Av	South	South End	(6)	10/18/12	Demo.
1000	Wethersfield Av	South	South End	n/a	9/11/12	-
431	Zion St	South	Behind the Rocks	(5)	11/14/12	-
156/158	Bartholomew Av*	West	Parkville	n/a	8/20/12	Demo.
153	Blue Hills Av*	West	Blue Hills	n/a	2/23/12	Permits
615	Blue Hills Av*	West	Blue Hills	n/a	4/1/12	Permits
621	Blue Hills Av*	West	Blue Hills	n/a	4/1/12	Demo.
62	Chadwick St	West	West End	(5)	11/13/12	Demo.
241	Colebrook St	West	Blue Hills	(2)	11/8/12	Permits
25	Cornwall St	West	Blue Hills	(6)	9/29/12	Permits
63	Evergreen St	West	West End	n/a	11/7/12	Permits
152	Francis Av	West	Parkville	n/a	6/25/12	-
64	Hartland St	West	Blue Hills	(3)	9/13/12	-
44	Harold St	West	Blue Hills	(6)	5/3/12	Permits
366	Laurel St	West	Parkville	(3)	10/11/12	-
57	Madison Av	West	Parkville	(3)	12/4/12	Permit
15	Marshall St	West	Parkville	n/a	3/27/12	-
1-7	Myrtle St*	West	Asylum Hill	n/a	9/11/12	-
1556	Park St	West	Parkville	(4)	6/25/12	Permit
156	Sargeant St*	West	Asylum Hill	n/a	9/10/12	COC
63	Sisson Av	West	Parkville	n/a	8/23/12	Permits
171	South Whitney St	West	West End	n/a	7/26/12	COC
206	South Whitney St	West	West End	(3)	9/11/12	Permit
260	Terry Rd	West	West End	(4)	6/19/12	-
143	Whitney St*	West	West End	n/a	1/13/12	-
147	Whitney St*	West	West End	n/a	9/10/12	-

*Properties did not go through the ABO Process due to activity at the property before LSNI's establishment.

Renovated Properties: Central District

103 Babcock Street



Before



After

75 Ward Street



Before



After

Renovated Properties: North District

479 Garden Street



Before



After

119 Edgewood Street



Before



After

Renovated Properties: South District

173 Linnmoore Street

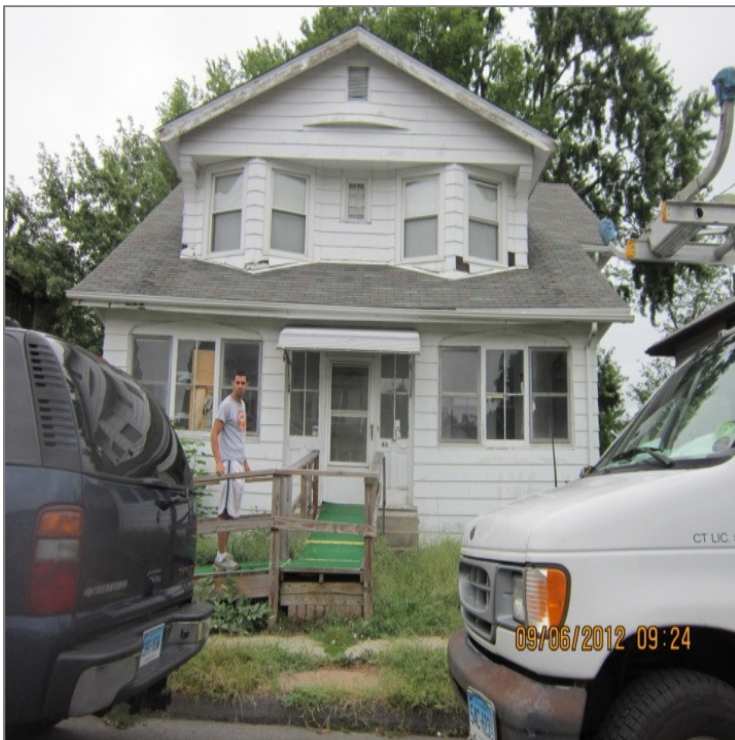


Before



After

46 Montowese Street



Before



After

Renovated Properties: West District

241 Colebrook Street



Before



After

63 Evergreen Avenue



Before



After

The LSNI Crew Activity

A vital component in achieving the mission of the *Livable & Sustainable Neighborhoods Initiative* program was the establishment of the Neighborhoods Initiative Crew (LSNI Crew) to handle the beautification efforts in the City by district. The Neighborhoods Initiative Crew handles overlooked beautification concerns within the neighborhoods by removing debris, trash, illegal dumping, overgrown vegetation on private properties throughout the City that are often neglected.

The crews collaborate with Community Court, the Department of Health and Parks & Recreation to complete more complex initiatives within the community. On January 1, 2013, the LSNI Crew was assigned to maintain all City of Hartford's properties (not for public use); a total of (53) to date.

Data as of January 13, 2013	North	Central	West	South	City-Wide
	1/13/12-Present	1/13/12-Present	1/13/12-Present	1/13/12-Present	1/13/12-Present
Private Property Nuisance Abatements by Neighborhoods Initiative Crew (as of 8/17/12)	18	3	2	10	33
Private Property Nuisance Abatements by Property Owner(s)	9	3	15	8	35

Internal Assignment Activities

LSNI has been tasked with many internal assignments since the initial implementation of the program, in order to be successful and see our own processes move towards completion, we've had to design, implement, and train within our own program.

- The Anti-Blight Ordinance requires that certain time restraints be adhered to. The enforcement of the ABO required the development of tracking techniques utilizing excel as our main software companion. First we initiated the LSNI "Timeline Trackers" for each district set up to oversee progress and document dates of mailings, return receipts, inspections, property owner contact, and comments for each property split up by our "Rounds" of PABOL mailings. This information is stored on a common drive allowing anyone internally to check the status of a property in our process quickly. The Inspector II's in Licenses & Inspections are the responsible "guardians" of the information in their own respective district tracker. This tracker contains (21) columns of information pertaining to each individual property that we added to and changed as our process developed.
- The most stringent time constraint in the ABO process is the necessity to take action within twelve (12) months from the citation date. This constraint forces LSNI to take action within a year or forfeit the work already done and start again. As a result of this time constraint Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been formulated and the Citation Action Committee activated. The Committee meets on a regular basis to take action (make decisions) in regards to properties reaching the critical year mark. The Committee then tasks specific Departments with follow up action geared towards achieving resolution, while maximizing the City's interest. The formation of this Committee showed yet another need to track (in Excel format) the actions of the Committee. LSNI tracks the responsible parties tasked with assignments and all pertinent information on the property, such as: owner's information, citation amounts, Notice of Violations dates, tax information, legal status, etc.
- The problems that arose with the outdated Health & Human Services Department process for private property nuisance abatement, the DPW calculations for cleaning these properties, and Licenses & Inspections inadequate system of billing (highlighted in the September 10, 2012 Report) led to a series of LSNI inquiries and procedural developments. These processes have become more efficient, streamlined, and are now tracked by LSNI. LSNI gathered the following departments to undertake this task and develop a Standard Operating Procedures (SOP): COO's office, Internal Audit, Corporation Counsel's office, HHS, Finance, and Tax Departments. The newly adopted SOP is currently being updated and meetings are held regularly to ensure workability, as well as, accountability. In short, the procedures expedite the compliance time required from property owners, if there is no compliance, the LSNI Crew cleans the property, the property owner is billed and if payment is not received within (30) days the bill is certified to real property taxes pursuant to State statutes.

Internal Assignment Activities

- The Mayor's idea of updating and enforcing the Special Assessment Ordinance to put the funding responsibility for LSNI on the shoulders of blighted housing owners rather than sharing it amongst every taxpayer has proven to be an arduous yet necessary task. LSNI is working on developing procedures for a tracking system, implementation of ordinance requirements previously ignored, further amending ordinance sections to facilitate the success of all new procedures, and customizing software and data systems across multiple departments to allow information sharing while measuring accountability. This process has recently started to take shape and will require the better part of a year to perfect.
- Tracking the progress of all properties in the ABO process is now a standard practice with many systems internally developed within LSNI for ensuring accurate and professionally presentable material. Reports are developed quarterly for presentation to the City Council as required by ordinance, presentations are given to city-wide stakeholders on a quarterly basis, and monthly reports are generated for LSNI's presentation at "Neighborhood Stat" detailing inspection levels, property progression, current, and future project workloads. All of these reports and meeting minutes are posted on the City's website for public viewing www.hartford.gov/lsni.

Infrastructure and Community Development

In its implementation of LSNI: the City of Hartford has strived to enhance the quality of life in the City, through adding, repairing, and replacing public infrastructure which sustains Hartford's neighborhoods and character. Selected projects were identified by the community during the summer of 2011's Kick Off of LSNI as a infrastructure and community development priority in the City. The following are specific projects which originated from the LSNI program:

Sustainable trash receptacles | *City-Wide*

On November 17, 2012, LSNI purchased and installed 40 Big Belly Solar Trash Compactors as a city-wide pilot program to improve trash collection throughout the City. Each location was selected based on the highest concentration of trash accumulation in a commercial area per district.

Eight (8) solar-powered receptacles have been placed in the Central District:

- 706 Park Street
- 598 Park Street
- 619 Park Street
- 30 Charter Oak Avenue
- 150/152 Washington Street (on the Park St side)
- 161 Washington Street (on the Park St side)
- 232 Main Street
- 339 Main Street

Eight (8) solar-powered receptacles have been placed in the North District:

- 1821 Main Street (corner of Mather St)
- 1665 Main & Seyms Street (Corner)
- 1170 Albany Avenue
- 1250 Albany Avenue
- 706 Albany Avenue
- 715 Albany Avenue
- 1136 Albany Avenue
- 176 Albany Avenue

Twelve (12) solar-powered receptacles have been placed in the South District:

- 263 Franklin Avenue
- 262 Franklin Avenue
- 113-115 Franklin Avenue
- 124-126 Franklin Avenue
- 443 Franklin Avenue
- 450 Franklin Avenue
- 243-245 Wethersfield Avenue
- 250 Wethersfield Avenue
- 347 Wethersfield Avenue
- Bulkeley High Wethersfield Avenue
- 661 Wethersfield Avenue
- 656 Wethersfield Avenue

Twelve (12) solar-powered receptacles have been placed in the West District:

- 260 Farmington Avenue
- 265 Farmington Avenue
- 501 Farmington Avenue
- 550 Farmington Avenue
- 662 Blue Hills Avenue
- 657 Blue Hills Avenue
- 639 Blue Hills Avenue
- 668 Blue Hills Avenue
- 1863 Park Street
- 1866 Park Street
- 1778 Park Street
- 1755 Park Street

Infrastructure and Community Development

Illegal Dumping Cameras | *City-Wide*

The City of Hartford has multiple illegal dumping sites, where everything from household trash to construction waste, appliances and tires are discarded. Most commonly, these items are dumped along roadsides, dead-end streets, ditches and fields, or wooded areas. In addition to costing taxpayers for cleanup, illegal dumping poses a threat to the environment and public health. Hazardous waste seeps into surface and ground water and dumping sites become breeding grounds for insects and rodents. The debris adjacent to or along roadways presents a safety hazard for travelers; they diminish the beauty and quality of life in Hartford. LSNI and the Department of Public Works identified several illegal dumping locations throughout the City of Hartford. In order to curb illegal dumping, the City started a pilot program to monitor these locations in December of 2012. LSNI purchased four (4) solar-powered motion cameras along with twelve (12) dummy cameras and posted them in prime dumping locations. Additionally, twelve (12) “No Dumping” signs were created and installed in these locations. The pilot program was in collaboration with LSNI, DPW, the Hartford Police Department and Community Court.

Graffiti Removal | *City-Wide*

LSNI originates graffiti removal referrals on public property (buildings, signage, poles etc.) which are removed by Knox Parks and/or Community Court. Knox Parks also continues to remove graffiti on public property as assigned through 311. Graffiti removal referrals (20+) were generated by LSNI. LSNI coordinated with Community Court for community service volunteers and supplied materials for the cleanup efforts. The graffiti removal projects were in the locations of Broad Street, Zion Street, Park Street, Campfield Avenue, Franklin Avenue, Wethersfield Avenue, Hamilton Street and Main Street. The Community Court crews cleaned street signs, utility poles, utility boxes, the metal security doors on public buildings and fire hydrants. In the future, LSNI will explore graffiti removal on private property completed by the LSNI Crew (during the normal course of property abatement cleanup), or through a private contractor.

Planters | *North District*

LSNI partnered with the Knox Parks Foundation to add vegetation to 13 existing concrete planters on Albany Avenue. From July 15th through October 31st, 2012, Knox Parks planted vincas, salvia, spike plants, marigolds, petunias, zinnias and begonias throughout the planters, in addition to mulching the planters. Twice a week each planter is watered in addition to replacing damaged and dying plants with similar specimens as needed.

LSNI Moving Forward

LSNI is an ever changing initiative concentrating on equally improving all City of Hartford neighborhoods utilizing the City's existing practices, as well as, researching proven best practices in other cities and customizing them to meet Hartford's needs.

- LSNI is working towards standardizing procedures within all departments city-wide to maximize employee output by incorporating computer automation into existing practices, training to eliminate different approaches to common tasks, simplifying and streamlining redundancy, and creating differing accountability across all levels of staff. LSNI is working closely with department heads and supervisory staff to address deficiencies in existing processes which make compliance with existing ordinance requirements impossible to meet. To solve for this LSNI is customizing its approach to every situation individually while listening to all concerns of staff involved – depending on the circumstances, changes may involve restructuring existing staff, proposing further ordinance changes, reassigning tasks, automating to eliminate redundancy, and in most cases drafting written Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).
- LSNI is implementing new “Loan/Grant” programs to specifically help those property owners who simply cannot afford to improve their property. Other programs being developed this year will target our problem of vacancy in the City and focus on offering incentives to those interested in occupying an existing vacant home.
- Coupled with the development of the newly adopted SOP's for private property nuisance abatement and the full roll out of the Neighborhoods Initiative Crew (LSNI Crew) with (4) HHS Inspectors this spring (1 for each district), LSNI expects to see a much cleaner Hartford with a positive effect spreading throughout the neighborhoods.
- With the newly adopted SOP empowering the Citation Action Committee LSNI has moved the City into a greater position to take control of abandoned properties. Linking all departments involved with selling and/or acquiring properties within the City, LSNI is encouraging and facilitating departments to leverage each other's outreach, connections, and power to better serve the common goal of improving Hartford's neighborhoods through the development or demolition of underutilized properties.
- LSNI will continue to enforce the City's Anti-Blight Ordinance with the existing process set forth by Corporation Counsel's office hoping to eradicate all blight throughout the City.
- Some of the initiatives LSNI will be working with community groups throughout the next year to further improve our neighborhoods include: funding for sidewalk improvements, landscaping and plantings, and many other ideas still in the planning stages.